

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for conducting electronic commerce, comprising:
electronically visiting, by a customer interested in shopping for an item, a comparison shopping site ("CompShop"), and inquiring about the item and comparative prices thereof;
running, by the CompShop, a query on a plurality of electronic stores carrying said the item, and asking for a price of the item; and
selectively determining, by at least one of said the plurality of electronic stores functioning as a "smartStore", an offer price of said the item and selectively returning one of a static price and a modified price,
said the modified price resulting from said the at least one of said the plurality of electronic stores learning the a best offer price received by said the CompShop from all of said the plurality of electronic stores.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
returning a standard price by ~~the eStore~~ at least one of the plurality of electronic stores determined not to be ~~a SmartStore~~ the smartStore.
3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
sending, by the ~~SmartStore~~ smartStore, a request to the [[]]CompShop[[]] asking for comparative prices of said the item; and
determining, by the ~~SmartStore~~ smartStore, whether ~~the an~~ asking offer price is the best offer price that can be offered, wherein if the asking offer price is determined to be ~~the a~~ lowest price, then the ~~SmartStore~~ smartStore returns its standard static price.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
if the asking offer price is determined not to be ~~the a~~ lowest price, then adjusting, by the smartStore, the price; and

returning a new price to the [[“]]CompShop[“]].

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the at least one of the electronic stores automatically changes the price depending on [[a]] the customer for the item asking for the price and what the lowest price is as recorded by the CompShop.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
maintaining, by the smartStore, a list of comparison shopping sites.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
if a request is made from other than [[a]] the comparison shopping site, then returning by the smartStore, ~~a standard~~ the static price; and

a.1 if the request for [[a]] the price is from a ~~comparison shopping site~~ CompShop, then submitting by the smartStore a request to the [[“]]CompShop[“]] or another ~~comparison shopping site~~ CompShop to get a list of all comparison prices for the item.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7, further comprising:
when ~~said~~ the smartStore obtains ~~a comparative list of pricing~~ the list of all comparison prices, determining whether ~~said~~ the smartStore can offer a lowest price.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 8, wherein ~~said~~ the smartStore determines whether it can afford to offer ~~a lower~~ the lowest price based upon the list of all comparison prices and its own cost price and required profit margin.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
if ~~said~~ the smartStore can offer ~~a lower~~ the lowest price, then returning ~~said lower price~~ the lowest price to the CompShop request.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
if ~~said the~~ smartStore cannot offer a ~~lower~~ the lowest price, then returning its ~~standard~~
static price to the CompShop.
12. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
returning, by the ~~[""]~~CompShop~~[""]~~, ~~the~~ a list of prices to the ~~user~~ customer.
13. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
selecting, by the ~~user~~ customer, based upon ~~the~~ prices received, a choice of one of the
plurality of electronic ~~store~~ stores for providing ~~said the~~ item.
- Q1 14. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said the~~ item comprises a
product.
15. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said the~~ item comprises a
service.
16. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said the~~ best offer price is
~~the~~ a lowest offer price.
17. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said the~~ best offer price is
~~the~~ a highest offer price.
18. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
caching, by the CompShop, ~~said~~ prices received from ~~said the~~ plurality of electronic
stores.
19. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

caching, by the smartStore, a list of prices received from ~~said~~ the CompShop.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the smartStore selectively visits ~~said~~ the CompShop, such that information from ~~said~~ the CompShop is cached by ~~said~~ the smartStore for a comparison with a price request occurring between visits to ~~said~~ the CompShop.

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein a price comparison is performed on ~~one of the~~ an identical item and a substantially identical item, and
wherein a graded price is offered on ~~said~~ the substantially identical item.

22. (currently amended) A system for conducting electronic commerce between a customer and one of a plurality of electronic stores, comprising:

Q1 a plurality of electronic stores; and

a comparison shopping site operatively coupled to ~~said~~ the plurality of electronic stores and a customer interested in purchasing an item,

wherein at least one of the plurality of electronic stores comprises a smartStore;
and

an electronic medium for linking ~~each of~~ the customer, each of the plurality of electronic stores and the comparison ~~shop~~ shopping site together electronically,

wherein ~~said~~ the comparison shopping site runs a query on the plurality of electronic stores and requests an offer price of the item, and

wherein the smartStore determines a predetermined offer price of ~~said~~ the item from the plurality of electronic stores and selectively ~~returning~~ returns one of a static price and a modified price, ~~said~~ the modified price resulting from ~~said~~ the smartStore learning ~~the~~ a lowest offer price received by ~~said~~ the comparison shopping site from all of ~~said~~ the plurality of electronic stores.

23. (currently amended) A system for performing electronic commerce, comprising:

a comparison shopping site ([[]]CompShop[[]]);

means for electronically visiting, by a customer interested in shopping for an item, the ~~comparison shopping site~~ CompShop, and inquiring about the item and comparative prices thereof;

means for running, by the CompShop, a query on all of a plurality of electronic stores it is aware of, asking for a price of the item;

means for determining, by at least one of ~~said~~ the plurality of electronic stores, an offer price of ~~said~~ the item and returning one of a static price and a modified price, ~~said~~ the modified price resulting from ~~said~~ at least one of ~~said~~ the plurality of electronic stores learning ~~the~~ a lowest offer price received by ~~said~~ the CompShop from all of ~~said~~ the plurality of electronic stores.

Q1 24. (currently amended) A signal-bearing medium tangibly embodying a program of machine-readable instructions executable by a digital processing apparatus to perform a method of conducting electronic commerce, ~~said~~ the method comprising:

electronically visiting, by a customer interested in shopping for an item, a comparison shopping site ([[]]CompShop[[]]), and inquiring about the item and comparative prices thereof;

running, by the [[[]]CompShop[[]], a query on all a plurality of electronic stores it is aware of asking for a price of the item; and

determining, by at least one of ~~said~~ the plurality of electronic stores, an offer price of ~~said~~ the item and returning one of a static price and a modified price, ~~said~~ the modified price resulting from ~~said~~ the at least one of ~~said~~ the plurality of electronic stores learning ~~the~~ a lowest offer price received by ~~said~~ the CompShop from all of ~~said~~ the plurality of electronic stores.
